

*THIS IS YOUR
GENERAL ASSEMBLY*



JOINT COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT
OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2005-2006

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2005-06

Connecticut's state legislature is known as the General Assembly. It consists of the Senate and the House of Representatives. In accordance with the Constitution adopted in 1965, senators and representatives are elected for two-year terms from single member districts of substantially equal population. The House and Senate meet at the State Capitol in Hartford. General Assembly committees meet and hold hearings in the adjoining Legislative Office Building.

SESSIONS

REGULAR SESSIONS

Odd-numbered years: Sessions begin on the Wednesday following the first Monday in January and adjourn not later than Wednesday following the first Monday in June. The 2005 session runs from January 5 to June 8.

Even-numbered years: Sessions begin on the Wednesday following the first Monday in February and adjourn not later than Wednesday following the first Monday in May. Even-year sessions are limited to budgetary, revenue, and financial matters; bills and resolutions raised by General Assembly committees; and matters the speaker of the House of Representatives and president pro tempore of the Senate certify in writing as emergencies. The 2006 session runs from February 8 to May 3.

SPECIAL SESSIONS: The governor or a majority of the members of each house may call a special session of the General Assembly.

VETO OR "TRAILER" SESSION: If the governor vetoes any bills after a regular or special session ends, the secretary of the state calls a legislative session for the sole purpose of considering whether to override the veto.

MEMBERSHIP

THE SENATE: The Senate has 36 members. (The Constitution provides for a Senate of between 30 and 50 members.) Its political party composition is 24 Democrats and 12 Republicans.

THE HOUSE: The House has 151 members. (The Constitution provides for a House of Representatives of between 125 and 225 members.) Its political party composition on the opening day of the session is 98 Democrats, 52 Republicans, and 1 vacancy.

TERM OF OFFICE: Two years.

ELECTED: In November of even-numbered years.

ANNUAL SALARY: \$28,000 plus \$5,500 expenses for senators and \$4,500 for representatives, plus a 40.5 cents-per-mile travel allowance.

THE SENATE	THE HOUSE
OFFICERS	OFFICERS
President: Kevin B. Sullivan (D) By virtue of his office as lieutenant governor, presides over Senate; refers bills to appropriate committees.	Speaker: James A. Amann (D) Elected by House of Representatives; presides over House; appoints House chairmen and committee members; refers bills to appropriate committees.
President Pro Tempore: Donald E. Williams, Jr. (D) Elected by Senate; presides over Senate in absence of lieutenant governor; appoints Senate chairmen and committee members.	Majority Leader: Christopher G. Donovan (D) Elected by majority party members of House. In conjunction with the speaker, manages the order of House business.
Majority Leader: Martin M. Looney (D) Elected by majority party members of Senate. In conjunction with the president pro tempore, manages the order of Senate business.	Minority Leader: Robert M. Ward (R) Elected by minority party members of the House. Nominates minority committee members and designates committee ranking members.
Republican Leader: Louis C. DeLuca (R) Elected by minority party members of Senate. Nominates committee members and designates committee ranking members.	

MAJORITY AND MINORITY LEADERS

Majority and minority leaders preside over party caucuses, direct party strategy, assemble party members for important votes, serve as party spokesmen, and serve as ex-officio members of all committees.

ORGANIZATIONS AND PROCEDURES

At the beginning of each session, the Senate and House adopt separate rules for conducting business and joint rules governing committees and procedures for introducing and reporting bills. The General Assembly holds joint conventions to inaugurate the governor and other state officials; receive the governor's state of the state, budget, and adjournment messages; and conduct other necessary business.

COMMITTEES

All committees of the General Assembly are joint committees composed of both senators and representatives. For 2005-06, there are 27 committees, 25 of which examine and screen bills and resolutions. Three committees (Internship, Program Review and Investigations, and Regulation Review) have equal numbers of members from each political party and special responsibilities. Select Committees consider particular issues and must report legislation to standing committees rather than directly to the House or Senate. Committees function regardless of whether the General Assembly is in session. Most occupy offices and use hearing rooms in the Legislative Office Building (LOB). The committees, their chairmen, and office locations are:

Aging (Select): Sen. Harris, Rep. Feltman, Capitol Room 011

Appropriations: Sen. Harp, Rep. Merrill, Room 2700

Banks: Sen. Finch, Rep. Doyle, Room 2400

Children (Select): Sen. Meyer, Rep. Cardin, Capitol Room 011

Commerce: Sen. LeBeau, Rep. Berger, Capitol Room 110

Education: Sen. Gaffey, Rep. Fleischmann, Room 3100

Energy and Technology: Sen. Fonfara, Rep. Fontana, Room 3900

Environment: Sen. Stillman, Rep. Roy, Room 3200

Executive & Legislative Nominations: Sen. Looney, Rep. Janowski, Room 1000

Finance, Revenue & Bonding: Sen. Daily, Rep. Staples, Room 3700

General Law: Sen. Colapietro, Rep. Stone, Room 3500

Government Administration & Elections: Sen. DeFronzo, Rep. Caruso, Room 2200

Higher Education and Employment Advancement: Sen. Hartley, Rep. Willis, Room 1800

Housing (Select): Sen. Duff, Rep. Green, Capitol Room 011

Human Services Committee: Sen. Handley, Rep. Villano, Room 2000

Insurance and Real Estate: Sen. Crisco, Rep. O'Connor, Room 2800

Internship: Sen. Handley, Rep. Bacchiochi, Room 5150

Judiciary: Sen. McDonald, Rep. Lawlor, Room 2500

Labor and Public Employees: Sen. Prague, Rep. Ryan, Room 3800

Legislative Management: Sen. Williams, Rep. Amann, Room 5100

Planning & Development: Sen. Coleman, Rep. Wallace, Room 2100

Program Review & Investigations: Sen. Cook, Rep. Sharkey, Capitol Room 506

Public Health: Sen. Murphy, Rep. Sayers, Room 3000

Public Safety and Security: Sen. Newton, Rep. Dargan, Room 3600

Regulation Review: Sen. Harris, Rep. Rowe, Capitol Room 011

Transportation Committee: Sen. Ciotto, Rep. Guerrero, Room 2300

Veterans' Affairs (Select): Sen. Slossberg, Rep. Michele, Capitol Room 509A

SESSIONAL COMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULE

After January 12, 2005 and February 11, 2006, the following "A" committees may meet only on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays: Education, Environment, Government Administration and Elections, Judiciary, Planning and Development, Public Health, and Transportation. The following "B" committees may meet only on Tuesdays and Thursdays: Banks, Commerce, Energy and Technology, General Law, Higher Education and Employment Advancement, Human Services, Insurance and Real Estate, Labor and Public Employees, Public Safety and Security, and the Select Committees on Aging, Children, Housing, and Veterans' Affairs. The Appropriations; Finance, Revenue and Bonding; Executive and Legislative Nominations; Program Review and Investigations; Regulation Review; and Legislative Management committees may meet on any weekday. The Judiciary Committee may meet on any weekday after March 30, 2005 and March 13, 2006. The speaker and president pro tempore or their designees may grant special

exceptions to these rules. Committees may meet on any day during the interim between the 2005 and 2006 regular sessions and after the 2006 regular session.

HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW

INTRODUCTION

Proposed Bills

Before the session opens, and for a limited time after opening day, General Assembly members may file proposed bills and resolutions in the house to which they were elected. Proposals may reflect legislators' special concerns or be introduced at the request of constituents, organizations, executive department heads, or other government agencies. Proposed bills are not written in full statutory language but instead state their purpose briefly in plain language. Bills drafted in formal statutory language may be introduced only by committees or by the leaders of the governor's party in the General Assembly at the governor's request.

Senators and representatives may sponsor bills jointly and may "sign on" as co-sponsors of bills originating in either house by asking the clerk of the appropriate house to add their names as sponsors.

Types of Legislation

Most bills, if passed, become *public* acts, which are laws of general application codified in the Connecticut General Statutes. Bills dealing with individual towns, corporations, special districts, or that impose requirements for a limited time become *special* acts.

Resolutions express the General Assembly's sentiments but are not laws and do not have to be signed by the governor. They are used for such purposes as confirming nominations, approving state employee collective bargaining agreements, approving settlements of claims against the state, extending congratulations or sympathy, making appointments, expressing opinions about national or international affairs, and adopting session rules. A Senate or House resolution (SR or HR) requires action by the house of origin only. A proposed constitutional amendment is introduced as a joint resolution (SJR or HJR) and follows the same procedure as a bill except for voting requirements.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Bill Drafts and Hearings

Each committee considers the proposed bills referred to it and orders full drafts of those it decides merit further consideration. Committees can also decide to hold "subject matter hearings" on proposed bills without having them fully drafted. A committee may also "raise" bills on subjects within its jurisdiction for public hearing. Committee bills (those based on proposed bills) and raised bills are drafted by attorneys in the Legislative Commissioners' Office (LCO) and returned to the committee for consideration. The committee holds hearings to give the public an opportunity to express views on bills. Legislators and state agency officials are allowed to testify during the hour before a public hearing. Members who get signatures from a specified number of House or Senate members can petition a committee to draft a proposed bill and schedule it for a public hearing in cases where a committee has chosen not to do so.

Committee Reports

After the committee has considered a bill, it may (1) issue no report, in which case the bill fails; (2) issue an unfavorable report; or (3) issue a joint favorable (JF) report. When a committee votes to report a bill or resolution favorably, it is submitted to LCO, which has 10 days to check it for constitutionality, general accuracy, and consistency with existing statutes and to correct references and phraseology. LCO then refers the bill to the offices of Legislative Research and Fiscal Analysis, which have five days to prepare, respectively, a plain-language explanation of its legal effect ("bill analysis") and a statement of its fiscal impact ("fiscal note"). LCO must transmit the bill, bill analysis, and fiscal note (together called a "file") to the house of origin within 15 calendar days after first receiving it, unless the speaker and the president pro tempore grant an extension.

Referrals

Frequently, bills must receive favorable reports from two or more committees before they are ready for action by the House and Senate. For example, bills requiring appropriations must be referred to the Appropriations Committee; those with penalties to the Judiciary Committee; those affecting revenues, taxes, bonds, and fees to the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee; and those changing state government organization to the Government Administration and Elections Committee. If the committee of origin does not refer a bill directly to another committee with some jurisdiction over its subject, the full House or Senate may do so.

Bills Not Acted On in Committee

If a committee does not JF a bill, it may nevertheless be required to report it out by (1) the speaker and the president pro tempore certifying the need for action (emergency certification) or (2) a majority of the members of the house where the bill originated petitioning the committee for a report and filing the petition with the clerk within a specified time. Petitioned bills are considered unfavorable reports unless the committee receiving the petition meets to vote to JF it.

SENATE AND HOUSE ACTION

Files and Calendars

Each favorably reported bill, with its bill analysis and fiscal note, receives a file number and is placed on the calendar in its house of origin in the order that the clerks receive it from LCO.

If the bill is not expected to be controversial, the majority and minority leaders may place it on the consent calendar. Bills on the consent calendar can be passed as a group without discussion. Any member may object to any consent calendar bill and ask for it to be transferred to the regular calendar for a full debate and separate vote at the proper time.

A bill can be passed even if it is not printed and in the members' files if the speaker and the president pro tempore certify in writing that an immediate vote is necessary. But members must still have a copy of the bill and a fiscal note on their desks before the vote.

General Debate and Voting

General debate and action on a bill is in order on the third day after the bill has been printed for the files and on the calendar for two session days. In general, a simple majority of those present can pass a bill or adopt an amendment. But the law requires a super-majority to pass a constitutional amendment, a plan to redistrict the General Assembly, a constitutional convention bill, a bill to exceed or amend the definition of the state's constitutional spending cap, or to reject an arbitration award resolving a state employee contract impasse. Final votes to pass or reject a bill must be taken by roll call. Members' votes are printed in the daily House and Senate journals.

Members may offer amendments before the final vote. The chamber must adopt amendments either by voice or roll call votes before acting on the bill. In the House, a roll-call vote on an amendment can be ordered by one-fifth of the members present. In the Senate, one senator can ask for a roll call vote. Except during the last three days of the regular session, a bill receiving a favorable vote in the chamber where it originated must be held for one session day for possible reconsideration. If the bill is not reconsidered, it is sent to the other house and placed on the calendar there. The rule requiring bills to be held for one day after passage is commonly suspended for immediate transmittal to the other house.

A bill that is amended again in the second house must be returned to the first house for approval. In the event of disagreeing action between the two houses, a committee of conference may be appointed to work out an agreement. Both houses must pass the bill in the same form before it may be sent to the governor.

GOVERNOR'S ACTION; EFFECTIVE DATES

After a bill passes both houses, it is sent to the governor. A bill becomes law when the governor signs it. If he fails to act within five days if the General Assembly is in session, or within 15 days if it has adjourned, the bill becomes law without his signature. When the governor vetoes a bill, it is returned with his objections to its original house. A two-thirds vote of the members of each house is required to override a veto.

Public acts take effect on October 1 following passage and special acts on approval, unless they specify otherwise.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

A resolution to amend the constitution may be ready for voter approval in a single legislative session if approved by three-fourths of the members of each house. If it is approved by at least a majority but less than three-fourths, it must receive a majority vote in the session following the next election in order to be placed on the ballot. A proposed amendment is subject to approval by the voters at the next even-year general election after General Assembly approval.

HOW TO READ A BILL

When a bill is introduced, it is given a number by which it is identified throughout the session. Senate bills are numbered from 1 through 5,000. House bills are numbered from 5,001 through 9,999. A bill reported to the House or Senate floor is also given file and calendar numbers. Amendments have unique "LCO numbers" and letter designations (such as House "A" or Senate "B").

A bill contains the name of the sponsor(s), a brief but comprehensive title (which may be changed if amendments alter its substance), the sections of proposed legislation, an effective date, and a brief explanation of its purpose.

Most bills amend sections of existing law. They contain all the sections of law to be amended. Most new wording is underlined. If there is an entire paragraph of new wording, it is not underlined, but preceded by the word "NEW." Language being omitted or repealed is placed between brackets. To understand a bill, one should read the old language with the new language, skipping over any language between brackets.

LEGISLATIVE TOOLS

Data Retrieval Service – Computers can provide the current status of bills. The computer service can locate a bill by number, subject, or sponsor. Computers are located in the Information Room in the Capitol basement (Vault 5) and in the State Library's legislative reference section. The Connecticut General Assembly also welcomes you to visit the State of Connecticut Legislative Internet home page WWW.CGA.CT.GOV which provides the same information.

Legislative Publications - Available at Bill and Document Room in the LOB, Room 1400 and online:

Proposed Bills, Resolutions, Joint Resolutions - Also available from Senators and Representatives.

Bulletin - List of committees and dates and places for hearings and meetings. Issued daily during legislative sessions.

Connecticut Legislative Guide – Roll; committees; staff; and rules, regulations and guidelines of General Assembly.

Legislative Record Index - Post-session compilation showing history of bills and resolutions.

Senate and House Calendars - List of committee reports, bills, and resolutions ready for action. Issued on legislative days.

Senate and House Journals - Summary of floor action during previous legislative day. Issued on legislative days.

Committee Action List – Summary of committee actions on bills.

Bill List – List of bills introduced for a first reading and referred to committees each day.

2005-06 LEGISLATIVE TIMETABLE

January 5, 2005 - Session convenes. **(February 8, 2006)**

January 14, 2005 - Deadline for members to introduce proposed bills. **(February 10, 2006)**

February 1-18, 2005 - Deadlines for committees to submit requests to LCO for committee bills. **(February 22-23, 2006)**

February 22-23, 2005 - Deadlines for committees to submit requests to LCO for raised bills. **(February 23-24, 2006)**

June 8, 2005 - Constitutional adjournment date **(May 3, 2006)**

DEADLINES FOR COMMITTEE REPORTS FAVORABLY AND UNFAVORABLY REPORTED BILLS

Committee	2005	2006
Aging	March 15	March 9
Children	March 15	March 9
Housing	March 15	March 9
Veterans' Affairs	March 15	March 9
Banks	March 17	March 9
Public Safety and Security	March 17	March 9
Program Review and Investigations	March 21	March 10
Energy & Technology	March 22	March 14
General Law	March 22	March 14
Higher Education and Employment Advancement	March 22	March 14
Legislative Management	March 23	March 15
Commerce	March 24	March 16
Insurance & Real Estate	March 24	March 16
Transportation	March 28	March 13
Labor and Public Employees	March 29	March 21
Human Services	March 31	March 21
Planning and Development	April 1	March 17
Environment	April 1	March 20
Public Health	April 4	March 20
Education	April 8	March 24
Government Administration and Elections	April 11	March 24
Judiciary	April 15	March 27
Appropriations	April 21	April 4
Finance, Revenue and Bonding	April 22	April 6

DEADLINE TO PETITION A COMMITTEE REPORT is seven calendar days after the date for submission of that report by the committee.

ELECTED OFFICIALS – 2005-06

M. Jodi Rell	Governor
Kevin B. Sullivan	Lieutenant Governor
Susan Bysiewicz	Secretary of the State
Denise L. Nappier	Treasurer
Nancy Wyman	Comptroller
Richard Blumenthal	Attorney General

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH YOUR REPRESENTATIVES

STATEWIDE OFFICIAL	
Envelope:	Her Excellency, The Honorable M. Jodi Rell, State of Connecticut Executive Chambers, The Capitol Hartford, Connecticut 06106-1591
Salutation:	Dear Governor Rell: or Dear Madam:
STATE SENATOR (District No.)	
Envelope:	The Honorable State Senate Legislative Office Building Hartford, Connecticut 06106-1591
Salutation:	Dear Senator _____: or Dear Sir/Madam:
STATE REPRESENTATIVE (District No.)	
Envelope:	The Honorable State House of Representatives Legislative Office Building Hartford, Connecticut 06106-1591
Salutation:	Dear Representative _____: or Dear Sir/Madam:

VISITORS' INFORMATION

Legislative sessions are held at the Capitol Building in Hartford. The public gallery of the House may be reached by stairways from the 3rd floor; the Senate galleries open onto the 4th floor. Committee meeting and public hearing rooms are located in the adjoining Legislative Office Building. Limited parking is available in the LOB garage off Broad St. and Capitol Avenue. Additional parking information can be found on the website www.cga.ct.gov

CAPITOL INFORMATION AND TOURS

Capitol Information and Tours, operated by the League of Women Voters of Connecticut Education Fund, Inc., is in two locations: Room 101 in the Capitol and first floor, west entrance of the Legislative Office Building. Free one-hour guided tours are available. The League can be reached at (860) 240-0222.

A Legislative Information Center, operated by the House Clerk's Office, is located in the Capitol basement, Vault 5. It may be reached by calling (860) 240-0555.

The Connecticut State Library has a bill information retrieval service with the status of current bills, and historical and governmental reference materials, for both legislators and the general public. Contact:

Reference Librarian
State Library,
231 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

or by telephone at:

Bill Status Information: (860) 757-6550

Legislative Reference Service: (860) 757-6590

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